

HARPSWELL *BULLETIN*

News for Harpswell Residents & Property Owners from the Town Office, April/May 2010

Town Web Site: www.harpswell.maine.gov

2010 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Budget

On March 20, 2010, voters gathered at the Harpswell Islands School to consider a municipal budget of \$4,007,083—a 1% reduction (\$39,208) from prior year appropriations. In addition to approving the municipal budget which maintained existing service levels and provided employees with a 2% wage and salary increase, voters authorized the Selectmen to borrow \$600,000 for purchasing emergency vehicles to be leased to the three independent fire and rescue organizations. This bond shall be repaid over a 10-year period, adding approximately \$73,000 to the Town's debt service beginning in fiscal year 2011. Areas of new spending that were approved included (1) \$20,000 for review of the proposed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs); (2) \$10,000 for energy conservation measures; (3) \$3,000 for the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority; (4) \$2,582 for Bailey Island Library Hall; and (5) \$2,500 for pursuing legislative review of the boundary line with Brunswick. The \$119,884 appropriation for Curtis Memorial Library was approved by a secret ballot vote of 634-419.

Ordinances

The following is a summary of ordinance actions taken at the Annual Town Meeting:

Animal Control Ordinance—Amendments were approved to make this ordinance consistent with State law and to provide a definition of “owner’s control”.

Shellfish Ordinance—Amendments were approved to (1) provide a more complete definition of resident and (2) make it clear that the conservation obligation must be waived or fulfilled by an existing commercial license holder and (3) reduce the amount of clams that a recreational license holder can dig per day from two pecks to one.

Site Plan Review Ordinance—Amendments were passed which authorize the creation of a Staff Review Committee with authority to review and approve minor site plan amendments.

Basic Land Use and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances—Amendments were approved that impose standards for swimming pools and fencing consistent with State law and enabling enforcement by the local Code Enforcement Officer.

Basic Land Use and Subdivision Ordinances—Amendments were approved to include single lot development for workforce housing; a density bonus for providing workforce housing units in a subdivision; and creation of an Affordable Housing Reserve Account.

Sign Ordinance—The existing Sign Ordinance was repealed and replaced to enhance clarity, to grandfather signs which are in compliance with the previous ordinance; to create requirements for Directory Signs where there are multiple businesses; and to provide an appeal provision.

Gift Ordinance—This newly adopted ordinance will allow the Board of Selectmen to accept gifts valued at \$3,000 or less that do not create annual liability costs of more than \$300 rather than having to send such items to the Town Meeting for a vote of the legislative body.

Blasting Ordinance—This new ordinance as proposed by the Harpswell Planning Board will require (1) permits for any blasting activity, (2) notification to abutters, (3) possible Planning Board review and (4) performance standards.

Elections

James S. Henderson defeated Alison S. Hawkes for another three-year term on the Board of Selectmen; Marguerite M. Kelly, Martha L. York and Rosalind M. Knight were re-elected to three-year terms as Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk respectively; and Linda W. Hall defeated incumbent Dorothy D. Carrier for a three-year position on the M.S.A.D. # 75 Board of Directors.

WEST HARPSWELL SCHOOL TO REMAIN OPEN

Although the M.S.A.D. # 75 Board of Directors voted to close West Harpswell School at the end of this school year in June, Harpswell voters, pursuant to State law, went to the polls on March 9, 2010 to weigh in on the following referendum question: "Do you favor authorizing the Board of Directors of School Administrative District No. 75 to close the West Harpswell School? The additional cost of keeping the school open has been estimated by School Administrative District No. 75 to be \$219,030.60." With 42% of Harpswell's registered voters (1,733) turning out, the majority chose not to authorize the closure of West Harpswell School, 827 yes votes, 906 no votes. While the Selectmen requested that the Commissioner of Education reconsider the \$219,030 savings calculation which had been estimated by M.S.A.D. # 75 and reviewed by the Commissioner's Office, the Town to date has received no formal response from the Commissioner. The Town is responsible for paying the \$219,030 in addition to its share of the M.S.A.D. # 75 School budget which has yet to be determined for the fiscal year beginning July 2010.

TAKE THE PLEDGE TO SAVE OUR BAY

At the Selectmen's meeting of October 29, 2009, the Board of Selectmen unanimously signed a Resolution, submitted by the Harpswell Conservation Commission (HCC) to adopt a policy of managing the town's lands using *Green Garden Methods* that will protect Harpswell's water. The Selectmen encouraged residents to follow suit in three major areas.

1. Replace "weed and feed" chemicals with slow-release, non-soluble organic nutrients.
2. Plant native species.
3. Replace lawns that edge on water with design alternatives.

To highlight this pact, the HCC has launched a campaign "TAKE THE PLEDGE. SAVE OUR BAY". In return for signing the tally sheet, you will receive a business card-sized certificate acknowledging your willingness to participate in ecologically sound garden practices. Pledge cards and informational brochures are available at the Recycling Center, Town Office and online at www.harpswell.maine.gov/

Also available online are articles detailing information on lawn care that address the how, when and why to solve turf pests and disease problems in ways that are safe for all, and questions to ask your lawn care company to determine if the business is in compliance with organic practices. A list of participating landscapers will be available on the web site soon.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS NOW ACCEPTED IN PERSON

In October 2009, the Town began accepting credit cards for all transactions completed in person at the Town Office. The company that processes these transactions charges a fee which currently depends on the type of transaction. The Town has been notified by the processor that by early May 2010 these fees will be set at 2.5% of the transaction amount. The Town does not currently accept credit cards over the phone.

MEALS ON WHEELS

What exactly is Meals on Wheels?

- A national program of assistance to homebound people, primarily over 60, who are at some level of nutritional risk. Spectrum Generations, the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging, delivers Meals on Wheels from seven locations throughout Central Maine.

What is nutritional risk?

- An inability to prepare meals due to illness or conditions such as light headedness or imbalance; to operate simple kitchen appliances; or to shop regularly.

What does this service provide?

- Five nutritious meals per week, delivered to your home by a volunteer driver.

How much does it cost?

- There is no charge, though recipients have the opportunity to make contributions. Suggested donation for a meal is \$4.00.

How do I apply?

- If you live in Harpswell, call 729-0475. If you are homebound, you will begin receiving meals within a few days and will receive a home visit to assess your needs.

Are there other benefits?

- Volunteer drivers perform a regular health and safety check with each meal, in addition to providing a friendly smile!

For more information about Spectrum Generations, please call 1-800-639-1553, visit their website at www.spectrumgenerations.org, or visit their new location on Main Street in Topsham to check out a variety of new and favorite activities, programs and services to help you along the path to living well.

THE GREAT HARPSWELL HOME ENERGY MARKETPLACE—MAY 1

Step right up folks and save Saturday, May 1, 2010, for the Great Harpswell Home Energy Marketplace at Harpswell Islands School from 11:00 – 3:00. The Harpswell Community Housing Trust and the Town of Harpswell are bringing to you a Marketplace of ideas, services, and products to save you money and improve home comfort. There will be energy auditors, insulation installers, building materials suppliers, alternative energy installers, heating systems installers, free gifts, demonstrations, and kids' projects. Did someone say food? Yes, that, too!

The Housing Trust and Town believe that saving home energy dollars makes living in your home more affordable. And it's not just a one-time savings. Improving your home energy efficiency saves you dollars year after year, especially as energy prices rise over time. More good news....Special, to you, the State of Maine will pay you to save on home energy consumption. That's right, Efficiency Maine will pay you up to \$3,000 toward qualified energy savings improvements. Certain requirements apply, so join us to learn more. Our exhibitors at the May 1 Marketplace at HIS will provide the details. Now is the time to plan ahead for next winter. Brrrr!

IMPORTANT DATES

May 1: The Great Harpswell Home Energy Marketplace *(See inside for details)*

May 1: Mooring Registration Fees Due

Resident or Taxpayer \$18

Non-Resident \$90

Rental \$70

Moorings registered after May 1 will be assessed a penalty of double the normal mooring fee pursuant to Section 5.1 of the Harbor & Waterfront Ordinance. Payment may be sent to the Town Clerk's Office, Town of Harpswell, P.O. Box 39, Harpswell, Maine 04079. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Contact Town Clerk Rosalind Knight, 833-5822, with any questions.

May 22: Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day—Bath Public Works, Oak Grove Road, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required by contacting Bath Public Works directly at 443-8356; questions may be directed to Arthur J. Moore Recycling Center & Transfer Station Manager Fred Cantu at 833-6472.

May 27: M.S.A.D. # 75 Budget Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

May 31: Memorial Day Parade, 11:00 a.m., Harpswell Center

June 8: M.S.A.D. # 75 Budget Validation Referendum, 3 voting locations in Harpswell

PUBLIC SAFETY REMINDER

The Town of Harpswell's 911 Addressing Ordinance requires that property owners post the street number for their residence in 4-inch letter height on the structure, mailbox or a post that is visible from the road. This enables an emergency service vehicle to find your location easily when responding to an emergency call.

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P.O. Box 39
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PRSRT STD
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Harpswell, ME 04079
ECRWSS

Resident
Orr's Island, ME 04066

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